

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

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P 270537Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0180

INFO DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: COMMENT ON THE APPOINTED SENATE

REF: FBIS BK 260450Z JAN 1975

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE APPINTED SENATE CONSISTS OF AGING MEMBERS OF THAILAND'S TRADITIONAL ELITES. IT HAS A WEAK ROLE AND PROMISES LITTLE CONTROVERSY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE REFERENCE CONTAINS THE COMPLETE LIST OF SENATORIAL APPOINTEES. THE LIST INCLUDES MEMBERS OF SANYA'S TWO CABINETS, A FEW FROM THANOM'S GOVERNMENTS, TWO FORMER AMBASSADORS, BUSINESSMEN, TEACHERS AND LECTURERS, LAWYERS AND JUDGES, RETIRED MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS, TWO DISTINGUISHED EDITORS, AND A LARGE DOLLOP OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS AT LARGE, MOST OF WHOM ARE RETIRED CIVIL SERVANTS. EIGHT APPOINTEES ARE WOMEN; 90 PERCENT ARE OVER 60 YEARS OLD; AND SEVERAL ARE PROMINENT SINO-THAI.

2. THE LIST DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY ACTIVE CIVIL SERVANTS BECAUSE THE CONSTITUTION FORBIDS THEM. NEITHER DOES IT HAVE ANYONE WHO RAN FOR THE LOWER HOUSE, BECAUSE THE CONSTITUTION STIPULATES THAT THE LIST WAS TO BE PROMULGATED ON ELECTION DAY, BEFORE THE RESULTS APPEARED. NEITHER IS CONFIDENTIAL

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THERE ANYONE WHO HAD PUBLICLY EXPRESSED SENTIMENTS AGAINST

HAVING AN APPOINTED SENATE, TO PRECLUDE THE EMBARRASSMENT
OF NOMINEES' TRUNING DOWN THE HONOR.

3. THE MOST PROMINENT ABSENCE IS THANAT KHOMAN. TO OUR
KNOWLEDGE THANAT HAD NOT EXPRESSED SENTIMENTS AGAINST THE
SENATE, SO THE LOGICAL INFERENCE IS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER
CHARUNPHAN, WHO HAD A KEY ROLE IN COMPILING THE LIST FOR
SANYA, WAS TIRED TO THANAT'S UNHELPFUL CARPING ON FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND DECLINED TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER SOAP BOX.

4. THE SENATE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY FIGURE MINIMALLY
IN THE CUT AND THRUST OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT. IT HAS A WEAK
ROLE AND IS NOT LIKELY TO TRY TO FLEX ITS FEW PREROGATIVES.
KINTNER

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